

Byrd Seeks Senate Probe of Charges of Report-Altering at CIA



WILLIAM J. CASEY
... said to have rewritten report

By Joanne Omang
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Senate Minority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) yesterday asked the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to investigate charges by a former CIA intelligence analyst that one of his intelligence reports was altered to support Reagan administration policies in Central America.

Intelligence committee officials said that the request probably would be granted and that a hearing could be held as early as next week. The former analyst, John R. Horton, said he would cooperate in any congressional probe.

Byrd said he was "shocked" by published reports of Horton's revelation that he resigned from the National Intelligence Council last May after CIA Director William J. Casey rewrote an intelligence evaluation on Mexico over Horton's objections.

Sources close to Central America policy-making said yesterday that Casey rewrote Horton's evaluation of Mexico's internal economic and political troubles to suggest that the problems could endanger the country's political stability, and that U.S. security interests might be threatened.

Such an evaluation "overstated the dan-

gers beyond where Horton wanted to go," one source said.

Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid visited the United States May 16-18, shortly after Horton resigned. The rewritten evaluation could have been used by U.S. officials to make de la Madrid more receptive to U.S. pressure that he help in opposing leftist—and, in particular, Nicaraguan—influence in the region, this source said.

"The idea was to get de la Madrid to go for a tougher line in Central America because of his own problems," another source said. He denied published reports that Casey had sought to launch a covert action program in Mexico with the aid of Horton's report.

Horton refused to discuss the contents of the rewritten report, saying in a telephone interview Thursday that it had nothing to do with Central America. Yesterday he confirmed that it involved Mexico, noting that the CIA puts Mexico in a category separate from Central America.

In Byrd's letter to Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), intelligence committee vice chairman, he said, "If accurate, these reports indicate there has been a shocking misuse of the CIA for political purposes.

"If the Congress cannot rely on the untarnished accuracy of the CIA's intelligence reports, then the asserted factual basis for virtually every major foreign policy decision of this administration is brought into question," the letter said.

A spokesman for Moynihan's office said the senator would request an investigation as soon as possible. Committee officials said that such requests nearly always are granted and that the hearing might be held next week. They said Casey and Horton would be called to testify.

Reached at his home in Maryland, Horton said, "If they're interested, I'll talk to them."

Another intelligence committee official said the staff had asked the CIA for a written report on Horton's charges.

Horton said that although he supports the administration's overall policy in Central America, he was concerned that debate within the administration on tactical moves in that region is circumscribed by conservative ideological considerations. He said all options are not considered, and he expressed concern that the CIA eventually might be blamed "if any cans get hung around anyone's neck" in regard to events in Central America.



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